



NEWS RELEASE

Committed to the future of rural communities

United States Department of Agriculture • Rural Development

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jaguar Communications Awarded \$4,641,000 USDA Rural Development Loan

Owatonna-based company to build broadband systems in 8-county area

OWATONNA, Minn., April 21 – U.S. Congressman Gil Gutknecht visited Jaguar Communications in Owatonna, Minn. today to recognize a \$4,641,000 USDA Rural Development loan recently awarded to the company.

The loan will be used to construct broadband systems that will cover an eight county area in southeastern, Minn., utilizing wireless, digital subscriber line (DSL), and Fiber to the Premise (FTTP) technologies. When the system is completed, it will provide varying degrees of voice, data, and video broadband service to more than six thousand residential and business customers.

"High-speed telecommunications services are essential to economic development," Gutknecht said. "This loan will connect rural businesses and consumers to a world of new opportunity."

Counties served include: **Rice, Goodhue, Waseca, Steele, Dodge, Olmstead, Freeborn, and Mower.**

"Jaguar Communications has always striven to deliver leading edge telecommunications and broadband services to rural areas of our state," said President/CEO Donny Smith. "The new services facilitated with this loan will advance the development and enhance the opportunities of our rural communities. Health care, education, economic development, personal growth, home entertainment, and satisfaction will all be improved through these advances. Thanks to the hard work of our dedicated team at Jaguar, this is the beginning of a journey that will see the digital divide diminish and finally disappear in our area."

Jaguar Communications aims to give rural areas the same access to high-speed communications technology found in most urban areas. USDA Rural Development began funding similar ventures after the 2002 Farm Bill.

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Jaguar – add 1

“President Bush wanted the Farm Bill to contain funding for rural broadband ventures,” said Steve Wenzel, State Director of USDA Rural Development in Minnesota. “I commend Jaguar Communications for taking the initiative to invest in broadband technology in rural Minnesota. Their efforts will go a long way toward improving the quality of life and creating economic opportunity in the area.”

Since 2001, USDA Rural Development has invested about \$2.5 billion throughout Minnesota. The agency's mission is to deliver programs in a way that will support increasing economic opportunity and improve the quality of life of rural residents. Rural Development provides investment and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure

For more information on USDA Rural Development, visit www.rurdev.usda.gov/mn, or call the office in Faribault (507) 334-2206 or Austin (507) 437-8247.

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